

"THE MOLASSES REEL."

A NEW AND POPULAR DANCE FOR SUMMER EVENINGS.

It was in vogue among the French peasantry in the sixteenth century, and has just been revived by Dame Fashion. How it is danced—Sketches of the Figures.



THE new dances, or old ones revived, which is the same thing, call for new dresses, new fashions, new styles, for both dames and cavaliers. Of late years there have been several attempts to popularize such old Spanish and French dances as the Pavane and Minuet, especially for summer use, as their slow and stately movements called for so little exertion, and they seemed admirably fitted for hot-weather parties. The most dignified and stately dance might take part in such a dance without any danger of wilting the tight, stiff band of immaculate linen encircling his neck. But for some reason or other neither the Pavane nor the Minuet became very popular. They were voted "deucedly slow, you know." This was several years ago, and now Queen Fashion comes forward with another novelty in the dance line. It has a number of names, running from grave to gay, from lively to severe. For instance, you may call it Quadrille Pose or Posture Dance, or, if these names don't suit, you may speak of it as the Spanish Jig; or, if you want to be very funny, you may even dub it the "Molasses Reel," it goes so awfully slowly.

The Quadrille Pose, figures of which are represented in the accompanying pictures, is said to have been a dance in vogue among the peasants of Brittany in the sixteenth century. There are eight figures altogether, and dames and cavaliers keep well apart, barely joining the tips of the fingers. These figures are not difficult to learn, consisting of "forwards and



backs," "swinging partners," "ladies' chain," "profound bows," "with some 'balances,' and 'chassez,' and so on. Four couples are needed to dance the Quadrille Pose, which, when well executed, affords both beauty and grace, and an opportunity to display any native or acquired grace.

In order to give the "Spanish Jig" a good send-off and brace the boys up to the point of consenting to exhibiting their legs, the hunt clubs of New York, at whose dancing parties the gentlemen appear in small clothes and silk stockings, have taken up this beautiful novelty, and it will be danced at their hops in connection with the summer meets. The only obstacle in the way of its becoming an instantaneous success is the demand which it makes upon the cavaliers to display their calves. This is a delicate point with the youth of today. Calves aren't what they used to be. Horse-cars and elevators have dwindled the legs of the male biped. He knows this, and would rather display his cheek or his biceps or manly chest than let the world gaze upon his lack of leg development. However, it is a thing that may be remedied. An artistically padded stocking will impart a wonderful devel-



opment to the leg, only, of course, the wearer must be careful and get things on straight. The gentleman's costume, besides the small clothes, silk stockings and low shoes, consists of dress coat, white vest, folding hat and eye-glass. The eye-glass may be dispensed with, but some men are so bare-faced that even a little piece of glass helps somewhat to conceal their thoughts. Among the minute of the cavalier's make-up may be enumerated the old-fashioned fob chain, a boutonniere and a single stud in imitation of the pin worn by the old-time exquisite.

The Quadrille Pose permits of no conversation and no display of emotion whatever, except it be an expression of almost adoration on the cavalier's face, and a sort of rapt, semi-verbal look on the visage of the dames. This is pretty generally the case with all dances of this nature, borrowed from the peasantry of the old world. They never chatter while dancing. It is a matter of business with them, and calls for their whole mind. Any one who has attended a German schutzenfest will remember how stolidly and silently the waltzers circle around the tent, hour in and hour out. The new dance will not be quite so silently performed as that, but its figures, which are indicated in the illustrations



of this style—require close attention, and should be attended by a partner of assistance in physical grace and facial expression, but not by much chatter. The Quadrille pose is not really an ancient dance, but is a revival of some-thing by a modern, as the Germans say.

six of the prettiest poses observed by the writer, in a recent trial dance, are accurately shown in the drawings.

Coming now to the ladies who are to dance the Quadrille Pose, we find no rich and elegant toilets, heavy with embroidery, sparkling with jewelry, covered with costly lace, stiff with jet or passementerie, or loaded down with floral garniture. All is sweet simplicity, accordeoned skirts a la paysanne, the entire dress of one material, waists made plain, draped, or trimmed with ruffles of the same stuff, or cut a la vierge, moderately décolleté, either sleeveless or with the old-fashioned puffed sleeve ending at the elbow—in a word, very good imitations of the village maiden costume, barring the long gloves, dainty slippers, and large fans slung at the waist. Tulle, muslin, foulards, surahs, satens, crepes in soft, clinging folds are the favorite materials in the Quadrille Pose, which, unlike the ordinary Lanciers, fills the place of the "show dance" of the evening, around which the flâneurs, idlers, and lookers-on in general gather to enjoy, criticize, and applaud.

The dames should take care that each dress in the same set is different, and the harmony of the figures should not be disturbed by the presence of one lady in watered silk, brocade or pattern dress.



The slippers call for thoughtful consideration. Much of the stockings should be visible, and of course in harmony with the color of the dress, then the display of a shapely foot in every pose lends a charm to the dance which must be seen to be fully appreciated. In order to give the dame an opportunity to display a pretty foot, daintily encased in slippers with high heels, the dresses are short and accordeoned at the waist as to yield gracefully to every swing and turn of the body.

No vulgar exhibition of jewels is permitted to mar the exquisite simplicity of these dresses in the Quadrille Pose. And the hair, too, must be quaintly and picturesquely dressed, raised from the neck, and coiled a la Greque with a fine old must be old tortoise comb set in the coil a little to the side. Or the hair may be massed in puffs on the top of the head after the manner of the last century. Something plain and sweet, like a spring of white lilies, a bunch of violets, beater, or mimosa, may be nestled in the hair and a small bouquet of roses be carried in the hand.

Such is, briefly stated, the Quadrille Pos., an altogether lovely novelty for



parlor or ball-room, which, when gracefully performed, cannot fail to call forth the applause of the spectators.

A few rehearsals and the various figures would be executed with that ease and certainty so necessary in all art. Already instruction in the dance has begun in the very fashionable academies of Terpsichore, and the earliest gatherings at the several country clubs will witness the first semi-public exhibition. It is hardly worth while to go into elaborate description of the figures, since they will be varied greatly on every occasion, the leader and his lady setting the example and the other couples following suit. The illustrations show the general manner of the poses and action. Substantially, this is a revival of the old, old minuet, with a trifle of enlightenment, and occasionally a suggestion of a May-pole dance or a Virginia reel. Of course, much depends on the caprice, temper and resources of the leader, as in a German.

Carelessly done, amid a buzz of idle chit-chat and by performers thinking of every imaginable thing save the business in hand, the Spanish Jig would speedily be voted a bore; but danced by a man and cavaliers full of grace and refinement, it



would be an education in itself and teach the noisy, bustling crowd that the charm of Hogarth's line of beauty is lost when merely flashed upon the field of vision.—New York letter to Chicago Ledger.

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